

MA Thesis Assessment Rubric

	D-F	C	B	A
1 – Overall Argument	Lacks an argument:	Argument is vague or obvious	Argument is contestable and moves beyond the commonplace	Argument is clear, substantive, contestable, and original
2 - Terms, concepts, and theoretical approaches	Does not define or incorrectly applies key terms, concepts, and theories	Begins to define key terms, concepts, and theories but does so vaguely and/or imprecisely	Key terms, concepts, and theoretical approaches are usually defined and used to good effect	Key terms, concepts, and theoretical approaches are well-chosen, well-defined, and effectively utilized
3 - Critical debates	Does not refer to historical and contemporary critical debates	Alludes to critical debates but only in general terms, without specificity	Situates argument and analysis within relevant historical and contemporary critical debates	Engages with recent and emergent critical debates
4- Evidence	Makes assertions without offering supporting evidence	Evidence offered tends to be vague, inconsistent, or inadequate to the claims made	Provides credible evidence for most claims	Supports all claims with specific, detailed, and effective evidence
5- Analysis	Merely paraphrases or makes inaccurate statements about the text	Analysis tends to be simplistic, superficial, or implausible	Analysis is plausible and begins to account for ambiguity or contradictory evidence	Analysis is clear, nuanced, and sophisticated
6 - Primary and secondary texts	Does not quote sources and/or quotes irrelevant passages	Quotes are simply dropped in and/or improperly cited	Quotes are relevant and are usually integrated and correctly cited	All quotations are correctly cited, properly contextualized, and effectively utilized
7 - Organization	No discernible organization; minimal or faulty transitions	Occasional lapses in organization with some faulty transitions	Logical organization with effective transitions between sections	Engaging organization and artful transitions
8 - Tone and mechanics	Inappropriate tone; frequent or major grammatical/usage errors	Rudimentary sentence structure; minor grammatical/usage errors	Appropriate tone; no distracting errors	Persuasive tone, fluid syntax, correct usage
9 – Thesis Defense	Responses fail to answer questions and reveal an inaccurate understanding of the thesis subject	Responses are incomplete and reveal minimal--and occasionally faulty--knowledge of the thesis subject	Responses are complete and exhibit sufficient knowledge of the thesis subject	Responses are thorough, articulate and exhibit in-depth knowledge of the thesis subject